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THE MASSACHUSETTS AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

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JUST FOR THE RECORD...

In 1990, Massachusetts agriculture sold $419 million worth of crops and livestock ranking forty-second out of fifty states. With a net farm income of $149 million, Massachusetts ranked forty-fifth in the country. Government payments to Massachusetts farmers were less than one percent of farm marketings in Massachusetts.

The number of Massachusetts farmers has increased from 5,400 in 1974 to 6,900 in 1990. Massachusetts farms produce fresh products for over 6,000,000 Massachusetts consumers. These Massachusetts farmers control total assets of $3.7 billion with a debt load less than half that of the average for U.S. agriculture. Massachusetts farmers purchase $149 million in inputs from Massachusetts businesses, pay local property taxes of $22 million, have a hired labor payroll of $77 million, and pay $25 million in interest payments to financial institutions and other lenders.

Massachusetts farmers own over 600,000 acres of land used in the production of agricultural and horticultural products. The leading commodities for cash receipts and the number and distribution of farms by counties are shown in the following tables.

Data source: U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Commerce

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Table 1. - MASSACHUSETTS LEADING COMMODITIES FOR CASH RECEIPTS, 1990

Rank	Items	Value of receipts	Percent of Total Receipts
		1,000 dollars	
	All commodities	418,462	100.0
	Livestock and products	115,937	27.7
	Crops	302,525	72.2
1	Greenhouse and nursery	151,575	36.2
2	Dairy products	70,054	16.7
3	Cranberries	61,924	14.8
4	Chicken eggs	20,563	4.9
5	Apples	20,337	4.8
6	Tobacco	13,442	3.2
7	Corn, sweet	9,088	2.1
8	Tomatoes	8,760	2.0
9	Cattle and calves	8,281	1.9
10	Potatoes	5,118	1.2
11	Hay	5,037	1.2
12	Hogs	3,564	0.8
13	Turkeys	3,535	0.8
14	Sheep and lambs	953	0.2
15	Maple products	922	0.2
16	Peaches	893	0.2
17	Honey	222	0.0
18	Farm chickens	190	0.0
19	Wool	57	0.0

Table 2. - NUMBER OF FARMS, MASSACHUSETTS, BY COUNTIES, 1982 and 1987

	1987	1982	% Change
Barnstable	158	123	+28
Berkshire	392	352	+11
Bristol	675	597	+13
Dukes	58	40	+45
Essex	439	372	+18
Franklin	616	521	+18
Hampden	490	392	+25
Hampshire	624	559	+12
Middlesex	569	567	N.C.
Nantucket	12	6	100
Norfolk	212	205	+ 3
Plymouth	775	649	+19
Suffolk	5	4	+25
Worcester	1191	1014	+17
MASSACHUSETTS	6216	5401	+15

1987 Census of Agriculture, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C.

Table 3. - LAND IN FARMS, MASSACHUSETTS, BY COUNTIES, ACRES, 1982 and 1987

	1987	1982	% Change
Barnstable	(D)	5,010	-
Berkshire	70,792	73,434	- 4
Bristol	42,562	41,883	+ 2
Dukes	7,314	7,355	- 1
Essex	30,940	30,283	+ 2
Franklin	82,864	79,412	+ 4
Hampden	46,747	43,835	+ 7
Hampshire	64,567	63,624	+ 1
Middlesex	38,709	40,173	- 4
Nantucket	(D)	(D)	-
Norfolk	13,124	13,398	- 2
Plymouth	77,140	80,392	- 4
Suffolk	(D)	(D)	-
Worcester	134,689	133,612	+ 1
MASSACHUSETTS	615,185	612,819	0

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.

1987 Census of Agriculture, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C.